

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, PINS, XF, LE

SUBJECT: FEDAYEEN THREAT TO CEASEFIRE

REF: BEIRUT 12470 AND 12479

SUMMARY: WITH CEASEFIRE IN SYRIA AND EGYPT AND UN ASSISTANCE TO ENSURE IT HOLDS, PROBLEM OF PREVENTING FEDAYEEN FROM DISRUPTING CEASEFIRE AND ONGOING NEGOTIATIONS BECOMES MUCH MORE IMPORTANT. GOL TAKING VIGOROUS ACTION MEET CHALLENGE OUTSIDE SUPPORT. LEADERS OF LARGER FEDAYEEN GROUPS APPEAR TO HAVE TEMPORARILY BOWED TO PRESSURE FROM ARAB GOVTS AND SAY THEY WILL COOPERATE WITH GOL ON CEASEFIRE. HOWEVER, SMALLER, RADICAL GROUPS APPEAR LESS COOPERATIVE. SABOTAGE OPERATION INSIDE ISRAEL, TERRORISM, AND SOME MINOR CROSS-BORDER OPERATIONS LIKELY CONTINUE, DESPITE CEASEFIRE. ATTITUDE OF USSR RAISE THIS QUESTION WITH SOVS. END SUMMARY.

1. AS REPORTED REFTTEL, GOL AWARE OF ITS ADDED RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CONTROLLING FEDAYEEN IN SOUTHERN LEBANON IF SC RESOLUTION 338 TO BE IMPLEMENTED. GOVT AWARE THAT ITS MILITARY WEAKNESS AND OPEN SOCIETY MAKE LEBANON CENTER OF FEDAYEEN OPPOSITION. GOL ALSO AWARE
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THAT INFILTRATION OR FIRING FROM LEBANON ASSUMES MUCH GREATER SIGNIFICANCE IN ISRAELI EYES WHEN THERE IS NO MILITARY ACTION ELSEWHERE, AND THEREFORE MUCH MORE LIKELY PROVOKE RETALIATION. GOLDA MEIR'S WARNING IN

KNESSET ADDRESS RECEIVED HERE LOUD AND CLEAR.

2. EVENTS OF LAST MAY CLEARLY REVEALED LIMITATIONS ON GOL'S ABILITY IMPOSE FIRM CONTROL ON ALL FEDAYEEN ACTIVITIES. NEITHER BLANCE OF MILITARY FORCE NOR INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION HAS EVOLVED IN GOL FAVOR SINCE THEN. THEREFORE GOL WILL REQUIRE CONSIDERABLE OUTSIDE SUPPORT IF IT IS TO IMPOSE AND MAINTAIN EFFECTIVE CEASEFIRE ON FEDAYEEN.

3. MOST IMPORTANT FEDAYEEN GROUPS IN LEBANON ARE SA'IQA (PLUS SOME PLA) WHICH RESPONSIVE TO DAMASCUS, AND FATAH WHICH IS INDEPENDENT BUT CAN BE INFLUENCED BY SYRIA, EGYPT, SAUDI ARABIA AND KUWAIT. SYRIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD FEDAYEEN ACTIVITIES IN LEBANON IS MOST IMPORTANT SINGLE OUTSIDE FACTOR AS SEEN IN EVENTS OF LAST MAY. GOL HAS THEREFORE BEEN IN ALMOST DAILY CONTACT WITH SARG ON THIS QUESTION AND IS RECEIVING STEADY STREAM OF ASSURANCES OF FULL COOPERATION, INCLUDING PROMISES MADE BY PRESIDENT ASSAD TO PRIME MINISTER SOLH IN DAMASCUS OCT 21 AND MORE RECENT PROMISES MADE BY PHONE. RECENT SYRIAN ASSURANCES SEEM BE GENUINE JUDING BY LIMITED FEDAYEEN ACTIVITY OCT 24 AND 25, ALTHOUGH GOL FEARS SARG COULD EASILY CHANGE POLICY SHOULD INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION CHANGE. GOL ALSO MAINTAINING CONTACT WITH SAUDIS AND KUWAIT IN HOPES OF GETTING HELP WITH FATAH. DESPITE APPARENT COOPERATION OF MAJOR FEDAYEEN LEADERS WITH CEASEFIRE, GOL KNOWS THAT IT MUST EXPECT TROUBLE ALONG BORDER FROM EXTREMIST FATAH MEMBERS AS WELL AS FROM PFLP AND PDFLP. AMRY BELIEVES IT CAN DEAL WITH MOST OF THESE THREATS SO LONG AS MAJOR FEDAYEEN ELEMENTS STAY OUT.

4. ATTITUDE OF USSR TOWARD FEDAYEEN IN LEBANON IS NATYRALLY VERY IMPORTANT. WE HOPE THAT CONSTRUCTIVE ATTITUDE DISPLAYED BY SOVS IN REACHING AGREEMENT ON RES 338 SUBSEQUENT RESES WILL ALSO APPLY TO FEDAYEEN
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PROBLEM. IF USSR WILLING THROW ITS WEIGHT BEHIND EFFORTS RESTRAIN FEDAYEEN, BOTH IN ITS DIRECT CONTACTS WITH THEM AND IN ITS CONTACTS WITH OTHER ARAB GOVTS, CHANCES OF IMPOSING CEASEFIRE ON FEDAYEEN WILL BE MUCH IMPROVED.

5. IN ADDITION TO DIFFICULTY OF IMPOSING CEASEFIRE ON FEDAYEEN, THERE WILL ALSO BE PROBLEM OF CONTINUING SABOTAGE ACTIVITY INSIDE ISRAELI-CONTROLLED TERRITORY AND CONTINUING TERRORISM. IT EVEN POSSIBLE THAT TERRORISTS WOULD STRIKE INCREASINGLY AT ARAB TARGETS, ESPECIALLY IN COUNTRIES BELIEVED READY TO "SELL OUT" PALESTINIAN CAUSE. THIS COULD RESEMBLE PATTERN OF PAST FEDAYEEN ACTIONS VIS. JORDAN, AND TERRORISTS WOULD

LIKELY BE SUPPORTED BY EXYREMIST ARAB GOVTS UNHAPPY WITH
SC RES 338, (E.G., IRAQ, LIBYA AND PERHAPS ALGERIA).
NEED TO GENERATE ARAB AND SOVIET PRESSURES TO DEAL
WITH THESE PROBLEMS IS CLEAR, BUT WE BELIEVE THAT
REASLISTICALLY THIS SHOULD BE TACKLED AT LATER STAGE,
CONCENTRATING PRESENT EFFORTS ON EASIER PROBLEM OF
IMPOSING CEASEFIRE.
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